

Parent to Parent

A Newsletter Specifically for Parents and Families of Students in Kentucky who are Blind and Visually Impaired

March, 2005

Kentucky School for the Blind

Family Support Center, Member of Parent Resource Centers of KY



What Teachers, School Nurses and Parents Should Know About Students Who are Colorblind

While dealing with one of my sons on the issue of colorblindness, I came across an interesting article. I've decided to re-print it in the newsletter along with another article from someone that deals with color problems on a daily basis. ~ Mitch Dahmke

By: Terrance Waggoner, O.D. (Reprinted with permission from the author)

Today, being colorblind (not having normal color vision) has a profound effect on a child's ability to participate in our educational system. Children not only have to learn their colors at an early age, but color-enhanced instructional materials are now commonplace throughout the classroom. It is important that the educational system and parents understand the special needs of color deficient children, and what can be done to help them in their quest to learn.

For some color deficient individuals, the names of red, orange, yellow, and green are simply different names for the same color. The same is true for violet, lavender, purple, and blue. Among the color pairs most often confused are pink/gray, orange/red, white/green, green/brown, blue green/gray, green/yellow, brown/maroon, and beige/green. Pastels and muted tones are difficult to distinguish. The color vision defect may be so bad that the affected person cannot distinguish brown from black shoes, a red traffic light from an amber one, or green grass from brown soil by color alone.



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Examples of How The Condition Can Cause Problems at School:

John is working in his reading workbook. The directions to one item say to draw a line to the red ball. The other ball is brown. Both colors look alike to John, so he guesses. The teacher reminds him not to be careless.

A teacher is writing vocabulary words on a green chalk board with yellow chalk in the mid-afternoon. There is a glare on the board from un-shaded windows. Peter is sitting so that the glare diminishes the figure-ground contrast. The teacher wonders why he is copying from a neighbor's paper.

The Color Vision Store has color vision screening and education products. From the popular Color Vision Guide to a comprehensive set of professional-grade color vision tests for all ages and populations. If you need to know how to administer a color vision test, they carry an instructional video as well as a range of books on the topic of color blindness in adults and children.

To reach The Color Vision Store, email them at www.colorblind.to.

Tommy ordinarily seems to enjoy reading aloud. Today, however, he doesn't volunteer and balks when the teacher calls on him to read. The poem in the reader is printed in blue on a purple background.

Susan, a bright and articulate youngster, was asked to go to the front of the class and read from the blue green book on the teachers' desk. She went to the front of the class and just stood there looking at the pile of different colored books. Not knowing which one to pickup, she started to cry.

T.J. was very outgoing in pre-school and kindergarten. He loved to wave his arms and volunteer to answer questions the teacher asked. The only time he did not volunteer answers was when it came to learning or identifying his colors. A lot of the colors looked the same to him. They just had different names.

The Kindergarten teacher notices the kids during art class teasing Jimmy. The other kids think that it is funny that Jimmy's stick people have green faces. The kids at school told the teacher Jeff was cheating during kick ball. They said he was breaking the rules by kicking the ball when it was out of bounds. They accusingly stated the boundary lines on the green grass were clearly marked with orange chalk. Jeff, rather than admitting he could not see the boundary line, simply quit playing with the other kids during recess.

How Can Teachers Help if a Child Has A Color Vision Deficiency?

Here is a short list of strategies that are easily employed and can go a long way in enhancing the educational experience of children who are color vision deficient:

- ✗ Label a picture with words or symbols when the response requires color recognition.
- ✗ Label coloring utensils (crayon, colored pencils, and pens) with the name of the color.
- ✗ Use white chalk, not colored chalk, on the board to maximize contrast. Avoid yellow, orange, or light tan chalk on green chalkboards.
- ✗ Photocopy parts of textbooks or any instructional materials printed with colored ink. Black print on red or green paper is not safe. It may appear as black on black to some color deficient students.
- ✗ Assign a classmate to help color deficient students when assignments require color recognition. For example, color coding different countries on a world map.
- ✗ Teach color deficient students the color of common objects. Knowing what color things are can help them in their daily tasks. Example: when asked to color a picture, they will know to use the crayon "labeled" green for the grass, blue for the sky, and light tan for Lincoln's face.
- ✗ Try teaching children "all" the colors. Remember, most color deficient children can identify pure primary colors. It is normally just different shades or tints that give them problems. If they can not learn certain colors, let them know you understand some colors look the same to them and it is "O.K."
- ✗ Make sure a child's color vision has been tested before they have to learn their colors or color-enhanced instructional materials are used.

Green Pigs Do Exist

By: Chris Dahmke, Freshman, Jefferson Community College

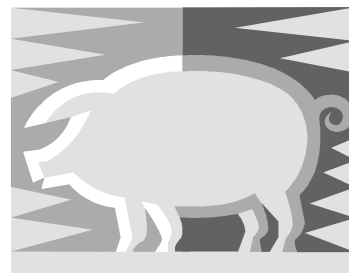
Have you ever met anyone with color confusion? If you have, you probably wonder what they see. I do not think people with color confusion see the same things, it varies from person to person. I have

always found it difficult to explain to others what colors I see. I have a problem seeing hues of green and yellow, blue and purple, pink and red, tan and gray, and black. All of these are basically the same color, but different shades and when the various shades begin to change, I have a problem telling what I see.

When I was in elementary school, I made a pig in ceramics class. It turned out fantastic! I painted my pig and was so proud of it that I gave it to my mom and dad to display at home. They loved my pig as I did and thought it was the most beautiful pig they had ever seen. Mom placed my beautiful pig on the floor next to the piano. It looked as if it were a real pig. Little did I know at the time, that my beautiful pig was green and white. I could have sworn that my beautiful pig was created gray and white! I guess beauty is truly in the eye of the beholder.

Being color confused does come with the aggravation created by people who,

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without realizing it, quiz me over and over by sticking things in my face and asking me to tell them the color on an item. This gets very tiresome and it aggravates me as they won't quit until they are satisfied that I really do have color confusion. This was usually done by my classmates. Hopefully as adults, they have come to realize the insensitivity of their actions. Another aggravating situation that came up for me recently was not being able to get a job in a fast food restaurant because of this color confusion. I was upfront with the manager about my confusion. The manager had me read the order screen. I couldn't read the screen because the shade of the print and the background were too much alike. I asked if the colors could be changed, but was told no.

One thing that I am not confused about is that in a bright classroom, it's VERY difficult to see bright blues and sometimes yellow/greens on a white dry erase chalkboard, even up close! I have mentioned color combinations that give me trouble and if any of those combinations conflict, it is extremely, if not impossible, to tell the difference. I feel that a good way to explain how color confusion feels is to take a piece of colored paper, grab a crayon or marker that is the same color, but slightly lighter or darker shade, and see how difficult it is to read the writing on the colored paper.

With my color confusion and my visual acuity difficulties, I have hurdles to overcome that many people never have to face. I try to keep my head up and keep a positive attitude whenever I do have these hurdles, even though it is frustrating. I have a goal to reach in my life and I am determined to achieve this goal, confusion or not. *Who knows, someday I may even own the franchise that wouldn't hire me!!!*

Fletcher Signs News Service Contract for the VI

Governor Ernie Fletcher signed a contract that will give Kentuckians who are visually impaired or disabled greater access to local news through an electronic information system. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, more than 253,000 Kentuckians are unable or have difficulty seeing print in newspapers.

Using a touch-tone telephone and toll-free number, visually impaired or disabled Kentuckians can access NFB-NEWSLINE each day to hear national and local news stories. Currently, people can listen to the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, *Louisville Courier-Journal* and *Kentucky Enquirer* newspapers by telephone, as well as more than 150 other newspapers and three magazines. Two daily newspapers will be added each month to the service giving users access to 11 Kentucky newspapers within four months. Currently, 38 states are participating in the service.

Kentuckians who are eligible for this 24 hour news service can subscribe to this free service by filling out an application from NFB which is available online at www.nfb.org/newsline1. Assistance also is available by contacting Pamela Glisson, NEWSLINE coordinator for Kentucky, at (859) 266-2807 in Lexington or toll-free at 1-877-266-2807. Subscribers then receive an identification number and security code that they use when they call NFB-NEWSLINE at 1-888-882-1629.

An Acronym a Day Creates Alphabet Soup

By: Mitch Dahmke

Do all of the acronyms used in our educational institutions drive you crazy? They drive me crazy, especially when I'm in a meeting or conference and an acronym is used that is unfamiliar to me. How am I or anyone else, going to understand what is being talked about if we don't understand the lingo that is being used?



Acronyms are developed as a means to save space on the large amounts of paperwork required in educational reports. Teachers have become so familiar with them that they often overlook the fact that most parents are unaware of many of their meanings.

In an effort to help parents and myself understand the terms associated with

"Do *all* of the acronyms used in our educational institutions drive you crazy?"

acronyms, I am in the process of compiling a list of acronyms used in education. I will share some of them with you. If you have an acronym that has been used in your presence and you don't know what it is, send me an email or give me a call. I will research it and share the answer in the next *Parent to Parent*.

This is just to get you started. Here we go!

AT	Assistive Technology
ARC	Admissions and Release Committee
EI	Early Intervention
EC	Early Childhood
MSD	Moderate/Severe Disabilities
TVI	Teacher of the Visually Impaired
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
IECE	Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education
OFB	Office for the Blind
DVR	Department for Vocational Rehabilitation
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
VIPS	Visually Impaired Preschool Services
KSB	Kentucky School for the Blind
KDE	Kentucky Department of Education
IGP	Individual Graduation Plan

Have Car - Will Travel

During my travels this past month, I have met parents who are interested in having a parent support group for gathering information, socializing, and understanding. In an effort to see support groups started in various areas of the state, I would like to encourage anyone interested to contact me (Mitch Dahmke) at 502-897-1583 ext, 205 or email mdahmke@ksb.k12.ky.us.



I will go anywhere in Kentucky to make family support groups a reality!

Deadline Nears for APH Art Competition

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) invites visually impaired and blind artists of all ages to submit artwork for its 14th annual international art competition. **There are two deadlines this year: April 1 for entries from preschool through high school and April 15 for entries from adult artists.** To enter, artists must meet this definition of blindness: corrected visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, or a visual field limited to 20 degrees or less.

Competition rules and entry forms are posted on the APH web site: www.aph.org. Artists may also contact APH to request a copy of the entry form and rules by calling 800-223-1839, ext. 357 or by sending email to rwilliams@aph.org.

Check Out These Resources

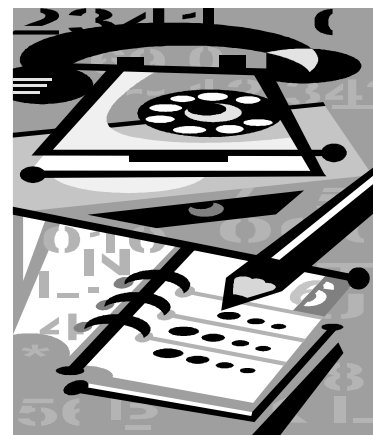
Funding Your Education ~ This is an introductory publication for students in junior high and high school. It provides general information about the federal student financial aid programs and how to apply for them. It is available online at www.studentaid.ed.gov/fye.

The Student Guide ~ This is the most comprehensive resource on student financial aid from the U.S. Department of Education. Grants, loans, and work-study are the three major forms of student financial aid available. The guide explains the programs in detail, including how to apply, and also includes sources of nonfederal aid. The guide is available online at www.studentaid.ed.gov/guide.

Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) ~ Students use the FAFSA to apply for the Department of Education's federal student aid programs. Although the Braille FAFSA cannot be submitted, students may use it as a reference aid. Apply at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Mark Your Calendar

Events of Interest to Parents and Families



May 2, 10-11 (8:30 AM-3:30 PM) Connect with KDE Topics will include: Update on KDE Initiatives, Kentucky Continuous Monitoring Process, Annual Performance Report, and IDEA Update. To register contact KY-SPIN, Inc., 10301 – B Deering Road , Louisville, KY 40272. Phone: 1-800-525-7746. Email spininc@kyspin.com

Center for Rural Development, Somerset (Pulaski County): May 2
Pre-registration deadline is April 30

Jefferson Community College, Shelbyville (Shelby County): May 10
Pre-registration deadline is May 9

Christian County Board of Education, Hopkinsville, KY (Christian County): May 11 Pre-registration deadline is May 10

June 15-17 (Wed.-Fri.) Autism Institute 2005, Kentucky International Convention Center, Louisville, to receive a registration brochure, please email Kristen.frarey@louisville.edu or call 1-800-334-8635 ext.852-7277

June 20-July 22 KSB Summer Enrichment Program, Kentucky School for the Blind, for information contact Darlene Middleton, 502-897-1583, ext. 243 or dmiddlet@ksb.k12.ky.us

MS-HS: June 20-July 1

Elementary: July 11-22

Career Program: June 20-July 1 and July 11-22 Students must be 16 years-old by June 16, 2005. Graduates are not eligible to attend.

July 2-8, National Federation of the Blind Convention, Galt House, Louisville, for registration information contact NFB or Mitch Dahmke, 502-897-1583, ext. 205 or mdahmke@ksb.k12.ky.us

National Organization of Parents of Blind Children (part of NFB Convention listed above), for preregistration packet contact Barbara Cheadle at NFB, 410- 659-9314, ext. 2361 or bcheadle@nfb.org; or Mitch Dahmke, 502-897-1583, ext. 205 or mdahmke@ksb.k12.ky.us

July 3-9 Kentucky Lions Youth Camp (for children ages 8-15 who are blind and visually impaired and/or deaf or hard of hearing), Camp Crescendo in Bullitt County for more information contact Camp Director Cecil Warner, 502-223-8514 or cwarner@min.net

August 12-14 "Families Connecting with Families," National Family Conference, Galt House, Louisville, for information go to www.aph.org/advisory/nfc.html.

Parent to Parent is a monthly publication containing information relevant to Kentucky parents and families of children who are blind and visually impaired. To receive an electronic copy of this newsletter, e-mail Family Support Specialist Mitch Dahmke, mdahmke@ksb.k12.ky.us or phone 502-897-1583, ext. 205

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If you would like to submit an article for the April issue of *Parent to Parent*, the deadline is April 15, 2005.

Parents – If you would like to “take your hat off” to an organization or group that works with blind and low vision children, contact Mitch Dahmke.

We want to hear from you!!!



Serving Students Since 1842

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